



KARAITE JEWS OF AMERICA

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1495 42nd Avenue

San Fransisco, CA

415-665-9766

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PUBLIC RELATIONS

Mourad El Kodsi

716-334-2413

Send editorial contributions to:

Editor, KJA BULLETIN, P.O. Box 4235, Mountain View, CA 94040

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❖ PRESIDENT'S LETTER ❖

Dear Members:

Summer is here and the KJA activities that have taken place have been wonderful. The committees that planned the Purim Party and the Summer Picnic deserve much praise for a fabulous evening of fun. Thank you to donors, members, sponsors and volunteer workers for these events.

This coming summer, KJA is sponsoring four camps ranging from the age of 7 to over 21 years old singles. We are looking for cooks and counselors to help us make this year's planned events very special. If you have the time and would like to lend a hand, please call me to work together.

The board members had a very enriching weekend retreat at Tahoe Donner. The need and desire for religious education is prevailing and we have dedicated the last Friday of the month for Shabbat Service for the children where we can learn Hebrew songs and study the Shabbat Prayers. As for the adults, we have weekly Torah Studies.

Our synagogue is WONDERFUL! We have weekly Shabbat Services.

Thank you for helping to keep the dreams of Karaites Jews alive.

Our children will thank us all one day.


Joseph Moussa

ISRAELIS CAN FILE CLAIMS AGAINST EGYPT

The government on Thursday advised citizens of Egyptian origin to claim damages from Egypt's government for property that was nationalized in the 1960's.

Post, Friday Jan 31, 1992.

The government on Thursday advised citizens of Egyptian origin to claim damages from Egypt's government for property that was nationalized in the 1960's.

The recommendation came after the Justice Ministry interpreted a recent decision by Egypt's Supreme Court to mean compensation would no longer be limited to \$9,000 for property seized under President Gamal Abdel Nasser in 1961.

Now that a reasonable compensation can be claimed, it is worthwhile for the Jews to submit their claims," said Yaacov Merom, a state attorney dealing with the case.

He said the new Egyptian standards set no limit for damages that can be paid. Private Egyptian lawyers brought the issue to Israel's attention, Merom said.

The announcement came just after Israel and Arab states discussed the problem of refugees at multilateral peace talks in Moscow. But Merom said the announcement on compensation was not tied to the talks.

Because Jews had been influential in the Egyptian business community, ... the amount of damages claimed could be very high, Merom said.

Merom said an Egyptian lawyer checked the property files at the Egyptian Justice Department and found 143 cases of Jewish families who had property nationalized by Nasser.

About 30,000 Egyptian Jews fled to Israel in the late 1950's and early 1960's, meaning that there would be a much larger number of families eligible. Merom said.

Because Jews had been influential in the Egyptian business community, most notably in the cotton industry, stock exchange and railroads, the amount of damages claimed could be very high, Merom said.

Merom told Israel radio that up to a million Israelis could claim damages from Arab governments, including those who fled Egypt, Syria, Yemen and Iraq.

Meanwhile, 35 Israeli families who emigrated from Saudi Arabia to Israel have asked Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir to submit damage claims for them at the multilateral talks, Israel radio reported. •

THE FORGOTTEN SECT

KARAITES GET A FOOTHOLD IN THE UNITED STATES

By Deborah Kalb The Jewish Monthly, March 1992.

Before entering this synagogue, congregants must leave their shoes by the door. Once inside, many worshippers settle into a kneeling position on the floor, which is covered with Oriental rugs. The cantor leads the group of about 75 in Hebrew prayers, and, at regular intervals those on the carpets lean forward and prostrate themselves.

There is no other synagogue like this in the United States. It is the only permanent place of worship what can call itself "Karaites Jews of America."

"Be proud to be a Karaite," The cantor tell the congregants. "Bring your children to services because it's hard to maintain your traditions here." He pulls out some photographs of a lost Torah scroll that had belonged to a Karaite community and passes them around. People exclaim over them in a mixture of Arabic, French, Hebrew, and English; the soft, rolling cadences of the Cairo-born older generation mingle with the California-speak of their American-born children. When the service is over, everyone goes outside for a buffet lunch of tasty Middle Eastern dishes.

The Karaites, one of the earliest groups to split off from mainstream Judaism, have managed to maintain tenuous existence since the eighth century, despite assimilation, anti-Semitism and denunciation by traditional Jewish authorities. Today, there are over 20,000

Karaites worldwide, with communities in Israel, the United States, Canada, France, the former Soviet Union and a few other countries.

American Karaites, numbering just 1,000, face the same problems in maintaining their Jewish identity as the mainstream Jewish community - but magnified several fold. They arrived in this country from Egypt without their institutional structures. They have no religious leaders, no Hebrew teachers and only one synagogue. If they want to obtain prayer books, or tapes with their traditional prayers and melodies, they must acquire them from Israel home to the largest Karaite community in the world.

The San Francisco Karaite community, the largest in the United States, only recently moved into its own permanent synagogue. Most Americans, including most American Jews, have never heard of the Karaites. "What is that? Is it a new sect? Is it Orthodox?" people ask Fred Lichaa, a computer programmer who came to this country in 1968 and now lives in Foster City, California with his wife, a real estate agent, and their three children. "I explain that the Karaite means the readers of the Torah, and that we follow the Torah, not the Talmud. It raises some eyebrows," Lichaa says.

"We should be called fundamentalists," says Joe Pessah, the leader of the San Francisco-area Karaite community. "We go back to the fundamentals," The Karaites' origins are



Photo by Steve Ringman

Abraham Massuada instructs his children in traditional Karaite prayers

a matter of debate among scholars and even within the Karaite community itself. Some believe the Karaites date back 2,000 years, to the Second Temple era. Others maintain that the community began in eighth-century Babylonian when Karaites rejected Talmudic law in favor of a "literal" interpretation of the Torah.

Karaites do not observe holidays such as Chanukah which are not found in the Torah. Their calendar, observance

of Kashrut, and family purity laws differ from those of Rabbanite Jews. A Karaite service, consisting largely of biblical passages, contains the "Shema," but does not include such basic Rabbanite prayers as the "Shemone-Esre." Karaite law does not permit sexual intercourse on Shabbat, does not call for the blowing of the Shofar on Rosh Hashana, and does not require the use of Tefillin or Mezuzot.

In Europe, Karaites and mainstream

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THE FORGOTTEN SECT

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Jews maintained separate communities, a fact which enabled Karaites to evade anti-Jewish laws under the czars and Hitler. But the two groups intermingled freely in Moslem countries where Karaites identified with the Jewish community at large, while supporting separate institutions.

The Egyptian Karaite community enjoyed good relations with the government until 1948 when anti-Jewish pogroms forced the community to flee. Most made their way to Israel, while others immigrated to the United States. In the past two years, a new wave of Karaite immigrants has come to Israel from the former Soviet Union.

Unlike some immigrant groups, Karaite Jews are not required to convert upon arriving in Israel and are accorded all the rights and obligations of Jewish immigrants under Israel's Law of Return. But the Chief Rabbanite requires that Karaites sign an affidavit accepting the traditions of Rabbanite Jewry in order to marry a non-Karaite Jew.

The San Francisco Jewish community also has welcomed Karaites. Karaite children attend Rabbanite Hebrew schools in the San Francisco area and the community met in a Conservation synagogue until purchasing its own building. Such cooperation was made possible by a 1984 decision of the Conservative Rabbinical Assembly which ruled that Karaite Jews should be accepted as Jews in every respect as long as they do not reject Rabbanite tradition. The Reform movement also reached

a similar decision. While many American Karaites are simply giving up and choosing to melt into Rabbanite or secular American life, a sizable group is struggling to keep Karaite traditions alive, despite the overwhelming difficulties. Joe Pessah and other Karaites have founded the Karaite Jews of America, an organization that publishes periodic newsletters to keep interested Karaites in touch with one another.

To these committed Karaites, teaching their children about their heritage proves a special challenge in the United States. They supplement Rabbanite Hebrew school studies with lessons in the Karaite tradition at home. Joe Pessah observes a Karaite Shabbat with his wife Remy and their two teenage sons every week. But for many observant Karaite families, Americanization has resulted in such innovations as Chanukah presents and American style bar mitzvah celebrations. "To deal with the strong influences of American culture, they're siding with the Jewish part of their identity," explain Ruth Tsoffar, a doctoral candidate specializing in Karaite Jewry. "I never knew about Chanukah until we came here," says Fred Lichaa, who soon succumbed to familial pressure. "It was too much to compete with Chanukah and Christmas. It was easier to say 'You'll get your gift at Chanukah.'"

The role of women in Karaite community has also undergone a change since the move to this country. In Cairo, Karaite women rarely studied their religion or Hebrew. But young American

Karaite girls go to Hebrew schools and some will probably have a bat mitzvah ceremony. "I sent my daughter to Hebrew school," says Sara Moussa, who was born in Cairo in 1950 and came to America at the age of 16 with her husband. "I felt bad that I didn't know (the prayer)". Mourad el-Kodsi, who has written a book on the Karaite community in Cairo, says that 90 percent of Karaite women in Egypt were housewives; American Karaite women generally work outside their home. Gradually, many ritual purity laws are slipping away, but one - forbidding women from entering the synagogue during menstrual period - is still strictly observed.

For hundreds of years, Karaites have not allowed conversion to Karaism. "We get a lot of calls from people who say they want to be Karaite," says Joe Pessah. But, he explains, a person is not considered Karaite unless both parents are Karaites: "There is no way to become one if you're not already one."

Increasing intermarriage with non-Karaites, however, has forced the community to bend the rules. In the Pessah family, for example, four brothers of seven married Christians. Thus, their children aren't officially Karaites, at least not according to the law laid down by Karaite religious leaders in Israel. But some community leaders are taking a wait-and-see attitude, hoping that if some children can be raised as Karaites, then they can at least keep the Karaite tradition alive,

"I think about my son" muses one

Karaite father, concerned about his children's potential spouses. "We are 1,000 people in the United States, out of 220 million. "In Egypt, the Karaite community was a close-knit group of people, all of whom were related. "Now, for the first time, cousins don't see each other," says Joe Pessah, who notes an increasing gap between American Karaites and their Israeli cousins.

To strengthen the community, the Karaites have sponsored a week-long retreat for young adults as well as camps for teenagers and children. "Anyone born in 1960 and after doesn't know each other," comments Sara Moussa. "If they get to know each other, it's the only way to keep going.

What is the future of this tiny splinter of Judaism? "Will we ever vanish?" Joe Pessah asks. "We are facing, today, challenges we haven't had in our history. But I believe our message is so clear that it will be picked up in a different form or as a continuation (of current Karaite practices)."

Those Karaites who are active in the San Francisco area hope that their new synagogue will serve as a magnet, pulling Karaites together into the sort of community, albeit smaller, that existed in Cairo. "It's very important to look at the profile of the worshipers," Pessah explains with the trained eye of a synagogue veteran. "If they're older, it's a matter of a few years (of attendance). If they're younger, they are being forced to come. If they are all ages, it's a healthy environment, and we have that now. •

KARAITES FIND A HOME

By Tamar Kaufman

The Northern California Jewish Bulletin, October 4, 1991.

The Karaite community, a little-known Jewish sect founded in eighth-century Babylonian, is creating its first synagogue in America - in San Francisco. It is the culmination of 20 years of hopes, dreams and hard work. But their moment of triumph has been marred by hostile neighbors and what may have anti-Semitic incidents. The nature of the incidents - two small paper fires and the dumping of garbage at the synagogue site, 1495-42nd Ave. - is ambiguous but, given vehement neighborhood opposition to the synagogue, the Karaites suspect the worst. No strangers to persecution, the majority of San Francisco's 500 Karaites came here from Egypt after life in that country became less and less tolerable for Jews.

America has been different. As it has for so many immigrants before them, America has left the Karaites alone to preserve their unique culture and to worship as they please, a right enshrined in First Amendment to the Constitution. But America's citizens have yet to grow into the promise of our founding document; we still tend to suspect differences rather than appreciate, enjoy and learn from them. Perhaps that's why one of the Karaites' new neighbors suggested they'd be "more comfortable" elsewhere. Every member of a minority community knows the meaning of that phrase.

Unfortunately, Jews are not immune from xenophobia and provincialism. For much of their history, the Karaites have had to fight for recognition within the larger Jewish community, a fight that continues in Israel. Because they have eschewed the Talmud and follow only the Torah, some rabbinical Jews don't consider them Jews, and those who don't accept Karaites have inordinate political power in the Jewish state.

Reform and Conservative Jews know that problem well. Here in the Bay Area, most of us have learned the lessons of pluralism, and enjoy a vibrant Jewish community whose dynamism depends on the greatest variety of Jewish life and culture. The Karaites are a welcome part of that life. Because they depend so much on Torah, their Torah scholarship is highly developed. Because they speak Arabic, they may one day help bridge the gap between Bay Area Arabs and Jews. In any event, we are proud that the Bay Area has attracted the largest Karaite community in America, and that San Francisco is home to the first Karaite synagogue in this country.

And we hope all Jews will assist the Karaites in their struggle to establish themselves - just as our parents and grandparents did when they emigrated from the lands of persecution. •

THE PATHS OF KNOWLEDGE

Wanderings of Judaism

The following article 'The Paths of Knowledge' was broadcast by 'Radio Paris' in June 1991 by Simone Douek who hosted Jacques Hassoun. Mr. Hassoun is a psychoanalyst and author of 'History of the Jews of the Nile'. The broadcast was recorded by Joe Marzouk of Paris and translated by Mrs. Sarah Simmons of Colorado Springs, Colorado.

Simone Doek presents the "Paths of Knowledge - Wanderings of Judaism"

Simone Douek: Karaism belongs to the cultural history of the East and West. The richness of this religious movement is expressed through its rites, music and literature. The Karaites are still scattered in different countries such as Israel, France, the U.S. or Lithuania. According to some belief, Karaism beginning can be traced back to a legend.

Jacques Hassoun: This ideological legend which has been fabricated by the rabbis of the Talmud, claims that Anan, from the line of David, was to become Exilarch, that is, head of all the Jewish communities in the world. The title of Exilarch existed in Babylonian, as a matter of fact, in Bagdad until approximately the tenth century. Anan seemed to be passed over in favor of his younger brother since the rabbis at that time believed that although he was the first born he could not assume this princely position because of his unorthodox opinions. Historically, an Exilarch had the title of prince of Jews. He had access to the caliph directly without waiting to be admitted. He had slaves, and was preceded by a large escort announcing the arrival of the son of David.

Therefore the part of the Exilarch was extremely important in the structure of the court of the caliph of Bagdad. So Anan is excluded and imprisoned in the company of a very important Islamic figure, Abou Hanifa, responsible for the founding of the Henefite sect. Now, according to Talmudic gossip and slander, it seems that after being freed he would have, at that point, said; "Since I cannot be the Exilarch, I will then start my own religion; and he founded Karaism.

However, events did not happen as reported, what is presently absolutely certain, is that early on, the Essenes themselves, displayed that tendency of extremely ascetic Judaism, away from the joys of pleasures of life, considering themselves as if in exile on earth, and living in self-denial and deprivation. Quite opposite, this is not the case for traditional Jews, even the most austere ones, who generally are not opposed to happiness, to being happy; the Shabbat is a holyday celebrated in a festive mood, etc. Well, this is one side of the story. Here is the other side: starting during the first

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THE PATHS OF KNOWLEDGE

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or second century a very strong tendency appears in Judaism; this is what seems to me to be the truth; a tendency in Persia, Irak, Palestine, Egypt and Syria to put into question the Talmud as revelation. You might know that there are two Torahs. The written Torah, the written law - well, the meaning of Torah is teaching but it is translated by law - what is called the Bible. Then, there is also what is called the oral law, the oral Torah, therefore the oral teaching considered as holy as the written Torah which has been entrusted by God to the Jewish people. Very soon new sentiments surfaced which stated: the oral law is not the law; it is merely opinions of rabbis. In short, every rabbi has his particular interpretation; therefore one should not attribute holiness to these human opinions. Consequently, one should not set the commentary and interpretation in writing; it should be kept running and flowing and limited to the domain of the oral tradition which is rightly its own. Moreover, under no circumstances should this oral law be deified. This movement appeared very early in Judaism and did not crystallize until the time of Anan.

Simone Douek: This occurred during the eighth century, more or less?

Jacques Hassoun: That's right; by the end of the eighth century or the beginning of the ninth and a Karaite theology was formulated as well. For they are not like the Samaritans who do not comment or interpret the law. But they consider that this process of interpretation and the commentary should go on indefinitely without being fixed once and for all; and this is what fascinates me.

Although I come from Egypt, I am not a Karaite; but what to me is absolutely fascinating is that one person's commentary can always be dismissed or contradicted by another person's commentary. For example, sometimes, there were families in which the father followed a certain type of commentary while his children were abiding by another. However, the final conviction - and this is very important - was that the written law should not be led astray. For example, it is written: "You will not cook the kid in its mother's milk". This has been interpreted by the Talmudist in a very distorted way: one should not eat meat and cheese, then wait six hours between cheese and meat; moreover there are utensils for cheese and utensils for meat. The Karaite say: "The law is very plain; no kid eaten in/with milk; if in doubt about the origin of the milk, no not mix kid and milk; period. But all the rest is absolutely allowed." On the other hand, regarding other interdictions, for example those concerning questions of blood relation laws, or blood related marriages, where the Talmudists went all the way to the other extreme, and were very permissive probably because the diaspora was in danger, the Karaites then, were extremely strict.

Simone Douek: It is therefore the rabbis interpretation that took precedence.

The commentary was therefore the most important, but of course, the written law exists as God's word or God's command.

Jacques Hassoun: I would say even more! The commentary for the Karaites is absolutely secondary. It is the divine law which is the most important. All their prayers have this same beginning; "You will not take out one single word from this law and you will not add one single word to this law".

Simone Douek: Understood; and what about their ascetics?

Jacques Hassoun: Well, this is the other side of Karaism which is very interesting, for they considered themselves for along time to be the "Mourners of Zion". They considered that the real disaster was the fall of the first temple. The second temple was also viewed as a disaster but it is the first temple destruction which is the greatest and the real disaster. During several centuries, one of the Karaites group called itself "The Mourners of Zion - Aveled Zion". They would not eat meat, they would not drink wine, they would not rejoice. They would not indulge in any of the earthly pleasures, and considered themselves to be definitively exiled from the presence of God. Therefore, no text, no commentary, no poem could alleviate their sorrow, even though their culture is rich in poetry, but is an elegiac poetry. "Follow carefully the poetry; it should not escape you. For if you want it, it is always present. Taste its pleasures, as sweet and pure as honey. Follow it in its meanders as capricious as it can be. Seek its company for she is the one that is preferred."

Simone Douek: I believe you called them the Protestants of Judaism.

Jacques Hassoun: Yes, once I said that they were the Jewish Protestants in the sense that the notion of universal ministry dear to the Calvinists, is absolutely important to them; that is, the rabbi is only the hakham meaning the wise man. The title of their rabbi is hakham as in certain eastern communities, but for them it is only that; one that is wiser than others; that is all. And when you attend their service, extremely impressive, you see them therefore, you enter their synagogue, there are no seats; consequently it has been often said; "They imitate Islam" Not true at all! They simply go back to the most ancient forms of Judaism. You find therefore carpets on the floor, like the Samaritans. Standing up, each one is completely absorbed within his own self. They kneel, they prostrate themselves; at a certain time one of them gets up to lead the prayer. It is really very moving. And of course the atmosphere is devoid of that appealing casualness so prevalent in orthodox synagogues where everybody talks at the same time, children run, people discuss, read the paper, exchange the

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latest news, while in the Karaite synagogue there reigns a remarkable austerity and silence.

Simone Douek: Is the Karaite ritual very different?

Jacques Hassoun: Oh! yes. The Karaite ritual is very different. First they only have two daily prayers. Here is an example; "It is written, they say, you should pray morning and evening". Therefore the Lord has only two prayers; the afternoon prayer, the "minha" does not exist. But the very structure of their prayers is different in the sense that no reference to sacrifice in the temple - extremely present in orthodox Judaism - is ever made. Hebrew is exclusively used; there is no Aramean; absolutely no aramean, while aramean is present in the orthodox prayers. Psalms are also very present in their ritual that recall the destruction of the temple as well as alegies which are recited in orthodox Judaism only the day of the commemoration of the destruction of the temple. There, it is done morning and evening; it is there, present. They have the same holidays as in traditional Judaism; in opposition to the Samaritans who celebrate only the three great pilgrimage holidays. There, all the holidays exist. Purim is celebrated as well, the feast of Esther. Only one holiday is not celebrated; that is Hanukkah, the feast of lights.

Simone Douek: And why?

Jacques Hassoun: Because they hold the opinion that Hanukkah should not be a holiday since it is not part of the biblical corpus or of what is called the 24 book corpus. It should not be celebrated because it is a national holiday and not a religious one. The dates of their holidays are likewise somewhat different since they go exclusively by the lunar calendar.

Simone Douek: The solar calendar too

Jacques Hassoun: Yes, but it should be noticed with the correction of the solar/ lunar. For example, Kippur falls frequently the day after it is traditionally celebrated. They also have days of fasting. Some of which are on different dates. The anniversary of the destruction of the temple in orthodox Judaism is commemorated one day only, the ninth of the month of Aab. For them it is the seventh and the tenth since they commemorate the destruction of the first and second temple.

Also what seems to me an important phenomenon is that these groups have survived; the Karaite entity is alive and active. One should not forget that at a certain time they were in the majority in Jerusalem before the Crusaders.

Simone Douek: What can be said about their status in the different countries they inhabit?

Jacques Hassoun: Listen; Only a small minority continue to exist in those countries where traditionally they used to live, but what is striking is their social position as citizens of the countries to which they belong. In Crimea and Lithuania they were all totally russified. For example, they reached very high ranks in the Tzarist army. They were quite welcome in high society which was certainly not the case for the followers of traditional Judaism.

In Egypt, it was the same problem, that is to say, they were completely integrated within the Arab-Egyptian culture. In Crimea they adopted Russian names, in Egypt, Egyptian names. For example this is the case for some important Karaite families, such as the Abdel Washed, the Abdel Moneim, etc. So, one can say, that in a way they did not practice a Judaism of separation but rather one of integration and of citizenship. I must add that during the war, the German, the Nazis, did not consider them as Jews since they did not believe in the Talmud. They have therefore avoided deportation at least those who lived in Europe.

Presently, where can they be found? Well, those of Lithuania remained in Lithuania, as well as those of Crimea. All those who used to live in Arab countries, such as Egypt and Iraq are now settled in Israel; similarly those who were in Turkey. They have rejoined the ancient Karaite community in Jerusalem which has continued to live there since the time of the crusades. However, a certain number of Karaites are scattered in many countries. One can find them in Paris, Geneva and Brussels as well as in the U.S., mainly in New York and San Francisco.

Simone Douek: What about Israel then?

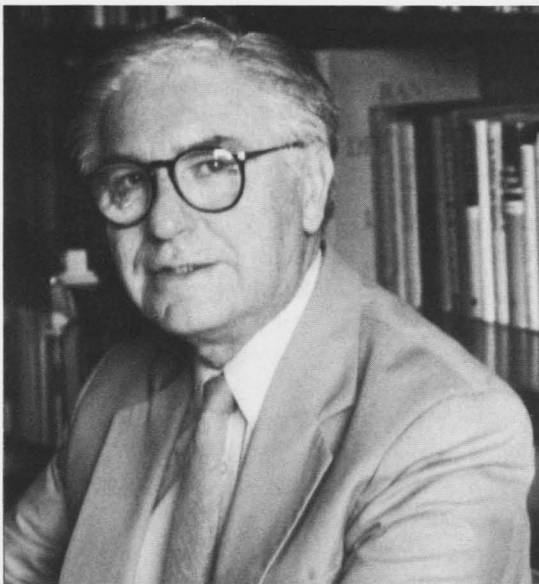
Jacques Hassoun: In Israel their status was quite dramatic. They went to Israel as Jews and were admitted according to the law of return. They served in the army but for a very long time, their religion was not recognized; they were in a completely irregular and illegitimate situation; therefore their weddings, divorces and burials were not recorded since as you know, Israel is not a secular state. There are only religious courts in Israel. Just lately they have been defined as a particular group with no ties to Judaism. They are ostracized and given a status of illegitimacy, of “mamzerut”. This is tragic since in traditional orthodox law, an illegitimate person can never be part of the house of Israel. •

Professor William Brinner

Professor Emeritus of Near Eastern Studies

My acquaintance with Karaism goes back many years to my study of Jewish history and, especially, to my lecturing at the University on that subject as a very young, new professor. At the time there was very little recent research available to help me prepare my lectures and I remember telling my class that Karaism had more or less died out as a branch of Judaism.

More than a dozen years later, when I began my frequent visits to Egypt, and walked through hart el-yahud. I found that next to it was harat al-yahud al-gara'iyin with its empty, ruined synagogues and schools. When I first visited the great synagogue in Abbaseya, no one was around to let me in. All this seemed to confirm what I had thought — Karaism was dead. In 1982, In a volume dedicated to that great scholar, Leon Nemoy, I published my first article on the Karaites based on the book I had found in the Magnes Museum among books smuggled out of Egypt to save them from destruction.



It was a year later, in January 1983, that I met my first living Karaite, through whom I learned that there was a community right near me, in the San Francisco Bay Area. Soon I began to attend Shabbat worship in Foster City and brought some of my students along to witness the living tradition of Karaism. In 1984 I was invited to speak at a great banquet organized by the community and we have been in close contact ever since. In 1989

I initiated an exhibit on Karaism at the Magnes Museum, to the opening of which we brought the Karaite Chief Rabbi from Israel. This exhibit was a revelation to the many visitors who had no previous idea of the history, culture and continued existence of this community.

My continuing interest in Karaism is based on my appreciation of the important contributions it has made to Jewish learning and thought in the past. But it is also based on an even deeper appreciation of the living Karaites community and its difficult struggle to maintain its religious and cultural identity as a tiny minority in an enticing environment of

assimilation in America, or in a generally hostile environment created by the Orthodox religious establishment in Israel. Unfortunately that hostility has been expressed in the Bay Area as well. Nevertheless, the community provides a welcoming and warm environment for its members in which the older ones can preserve their traditions and the younger ones can learn to participate in and carry on those traditions.

Three of my graduate students have been motivated to write their doctoral dissertations on Karaite topics or are using Karaite books and manuscripts as their source material. One is Ruth Tsoffar, who is writing a dissertation called *Unfermented History: The Karaite Jewish Community in the Bay Area*. In this work she studies the strength of traditional belief and practice as handed on from parents to children, especially in a community that has been uprooted and dispersed into a tiny minority facing the prospect of assimilation.

The second is Marc Bernstein, who is translating and analyzing a Karaite text from Cairo in Judeo-Arabic (Egyptian Arabic written in Hebrew letters), called *Qissit Sayidna Yusuf*; popular stories about Joseph, the beloved son of Jacob, which Bernstein is comparing with Rabbanite Midrash and the Muslim stories about biblical figures called *qisas al-anbiya*.

The third is Fred Astren, whose dissertation called *Content and Context in Karaite Historiography* studies Karaite approaches to the study of their history working back from the writings of Simhah Isaac Lutzki through great figures like Isaac Troki and Elijah Bashyatchi to al-Qirqisani.

All three of these students are doing brilliant work that will help show American and Israeli scholars the value of the living Karaite tradition for modern Jewish scholarship. In national and international scholarly conferences we now see a new interest in Karaism. Through the work of these young scholars and others like them in Israel, Europe and the United States, the great traditions and contributions of Karaism will be preserved and made known to a larger public. It is my hope that some young Karaites will be inspired to join in this scholarly enterprise.

Best Regards,

William M. Brinner

Professor Emeritus of Near Eastern Studies

University of California, Berkeley

SOVIET FUND OF CULTURE

THE CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF KARAITES

Dear Sir!

I'm a representative of The Association of Karaites by the Soviet Culture Fund. When we had known that Rashid M. Caplanow was going to the U.S.A. we asked him to establish contacts with Karaites at places which he is going to visit. Recently he returned back and delivered your address. He told us about the heartily reception you gave him and about your desire to establish contacts with our association. We'd like to establish friendly relations with Karaites in Los Angeles.

Firstly, I'd like to say some words about Karaites at the U.S.S.R. and our association. The total amount of Karaites in our country is about 3,000. In the U.S.S.R. Karaites live mostly in Crimea, where they had firstly inhabited as descendant of Turkic tribes, which had been included into Hazar state. In XIII century a part of Karaites migrated to Lithuania and live there up today.

Another part of Karaites is dispersed at the South of Ukraine and live in cities like Moscow, Minsk, Kiev, Leningrad and others. Our association exists for two years. Today it unites mainly the Karaites of Moscow and the Crimea. The contacts with the other Karaites are establishing.

The association is busy with cultured - educational activities, preserved and reconstruction of monuments of national culture, prayers houses (Kenas) in Chuft-Cale, Evpatorie, publishing of literature about the Karaites and by the Karaites authors, organization of Karaites meetings and visiting at cultural festivals, charity, business connections with Karaites in other countries etc.

We would be glad to know about your life. Please write some words about yourself. We should answer your questions with pleasure.

We are looking forward to meeting with you.

Yours truly,

Twice-President Shamash Sergei Yacovlevich

REGINA L. NEWMAN
Home Tel: 305-598-0874
9305 SW 77 Avenue, Apt 237
Miami, FL 33156

To whom it may concern,

My name is Regina L. Newman, and I live in Miami, Florida where I work as a teacher. I teach at two private Jewish schools in the area of Judaic Studies, in addition to teaching Adult Education. I also teach at a local city college and lecture for the Educational Department of the Greater Miami Jewish Federation. I am also very involved in several Sephardic communities here in Miami - in terms of academics and cultural affairs. I read an article in our local Jewish newspaper and wanted to make "contact" with your congregation.

I am half Sephardic and half Ashkenazie. I did a great deal of research in the area of Islamic History and in Egyptian political history, and was interested in Karaite history. I studied Arabic, Hebrew and Farsi in addition to a little Kurdish. I am fascinated by your congregations customs and rituals and am really impressed with your commitment to maintaining your "way", particularly in the presence of hundreds of years of ridicule from the Rabbinical Courts!!

I ask that a representative from your congregation write or telephone me so that I can learn more and assist you.

Respectfully Yours

Regina L. Newman

INTELLECTUAL KARAITE JEWS
3, Avenue de Corinthe
13006 Marseille, France /Fax 91-33-79-46

Dear friends,

We are looking forward to having a medical and dental building for our community in Israel. That effort is made possible by the voluntary work of volunteer doctors, dentists, nurses. If you would like to participate, please contact me.

May G-d bless you all.

Dr. Andre Siahou

❖ MILESTONES ❖

BIRTHS

- › **Aaron David**, born to Gabriel and Cindy Massuda of Maryland on November 18, 1991. Brit Milah held on November 25, 1991. Joseph Massuda, born to David and Mona Massuda of Maryland.
- › **Derek Maleh**, born to David and Deborah Maleh of Chicago on April 8th, 1992. The Brit Milah was on April 15th.

BAR & BAT MITZVAH

- › **Michelle Sarah Mourad**, daughter of Henry & Doris Mourad, celebrated her Bat Mitzvah on Saturday, November 2, 1992 at Congregation Beth Am in Los Altos Hills, California.
- › **Sylvia Menache**, daughter of Sonia & Tewfik Menache, celebrated her Bat Mitzvah on Saturday, November 9, 1992 Temple Israel in Long Beach, California.
- › **Rebecca Sarah Menashe**, daughter of Abraham Menashe and Dvora Telushkin, celebrated her Bat Mitzvah on Saturday November 16, 1991 at Tiferet Israel Synagogue in New York City, New York.
- › **Joshua Mangoubi**, son of Esther and Nabih Mangoubi, celebrated his Bar Mitzvah on Saturday, March 17, 1992 at Congregation Beth Shalom in Northbrook, Illinois.
- › **Michelle Michal Massuda**, daughter of Dr. Yacoub and Elana Massuda, celebrated her Bat Mitzvah on Saturday, May 9th, 1992 at Temple Israel in Merrillville, Indiana

GRADUATIONS

- › **Samuel Saddik** has just graduated from the University of California at Berkeley with a bachelors of arts degree in Human Biodynamics. He is presently interning in the Rehabilitation center of St. Mary's Hospital in San Francisco. We works with physical therapists in aiding the development of stroke victims and spinal cord injured victims. He plans to further his education with a graduate degree in Physical Therapy. •

WEDDINGS

› **Dina & Joseph Hefez** were married on Sunday, March 29, 1992 at The Hilton in Dedham, Massachusetts. Dina is the daughter of Mrs. Nelly Matzliach from Israel and Joseph is the son of Mr. & Mrs. Ishak Hefez of Massachusetts.

› **Nelly Daniel and Michael Anthony Kozlowski** were married on May 30, 1992 at the Sheraton Tara Hotel in Danvers, Massachusetts.



Mazal Tov to Mark and Stacey Afrangui of Silver Spring, Maryland were married on June 2, 1991. Stacey is the daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Barton Morrison, Mark is the son of Mr. & Mrs. Fred Afrangui.

❖ BERAKAH ❖

DAVID OVADIA, ROBERT OVADIA, ESTHER OVADIA, By Elie Ovadia • ABRAHAM, JEANNE, NORA & JOEL MASSUDA, By Abraham Massuda • SHULAMIT TAHAN, By Shulamit Tahan • MARC, BELLA, ISABEL, ALBERT, GRACIA & EMIEL KHEDR, By Victor Khedr • DEBORAH BAT ELIYAHOU PESSAH, MOSHE BEN SHALOM MOSHE PESSAH, By Elie Moussa • DAVID BEN MOSHE MASSUDA, By Abraham Massuda • DAVID MOUSSA, DAVID KHEDR, By Emiel Khedr • YOUSSEF MASSUDA, By Youssef & Louise Massuda • REBECCA SARAH MENASHE, By Leonie Menashe • VICTOR OVADIA, By Allen Ovadia, Victor, Laila, Robert Danny & Joseph Ovadia • ALICE OVADIA & FORTUNEE OVADIA, By Allen Ovadia • CLEMENT VITA ABDEL WAHED, By Abdel Wahed Family • DR. ELIE JACQUES MANGOUBI, ZAKI JACQUES MANGOUBI, NABIH JACQUES MANGOUBI, By Esther Mangoubi • DAVID MASSUDA & FAMILY & NEW BORN SON, JOSEPH • By Abraham Massuda. ALBERT TAHAN & FAMILY, By Albert Tahan • YOUSSEF MASSUDA, TEWFIK & NELLY MASSUDA, By Youssef Massuda • IBRAHIM LEVY & FAMILY, By Ibrahim Levy. •

❖ MI SHEBEIRAKH ❖

PRAYER FOR THE SICK

NAZLI DAVID DARWISH, By The Massuda Family • MAURICE H. LICHAA, By Yacob Pessah, Amin Pessah, Joe Pessah. Fortune Lichaa, Abraham Massuda • DR. ELIE HABIB, By Camelia Habib, Alice Ovadia, Suzanne Massouda, Abraham Massuda. ALEGRA LICHAA, NELLY MASSUDA, By Abraham Massuda. YVONNE DARWISH, SOL TOM SELIM, By Alice Ovadia • KAMY MOURAD, By Kamy Mourad • AMIN LICHAA & YVONNE DARWISH, By Allen Ovadia. SOL SELIM, By Josette, Sabrina & Sacha Selim • SOL SELIM, By Remy & Joe Pessah and Liliane & Albert Mourad • ESTHER EL KODSI, BOB CLARY, ABRAHM TAHAN, By Esther El Kodsi • RACHEL BAT NEIMAT HAIIN, By Yacoub Pessah • AMIRA MOUSSA, By David Moussa • ABRAHAM DANIEL, By Joe Moussa • BOB CLARY, By Simone Mourad, Sarine Wahed, Remy & Joe Pessah, Liliane & Albert Mourad. •

We record with great sorrow the passing of

...Mr. David Zaki Lichaa of Switzerland. Mr. David Zaki Lichaa was the biggest inspiration for many Karaites. His singing at Egypt's Synagogue still echo in my ears. He was a driving force in building Egypt's famous Abasseya Synagogue.

Remy Pessah

...Dr. Elie Habib Isaac of Reno, Nevada.

Dr. Elie Isaac passed away suddenly after a heart surgery on March 5, 1992. He left behind his beloved wife Hoda and their three children, Sam, Benjamin and Dina. We will all miss Dr. Elie's caring and kindness. Wherever he went, he left behind great memories of a loving person.

A grateful thank you to all our friends for their many prayers, gifts, cards and thoughtfulness at this sad time on the death of our beloved husband and father, Dr. Elie Isaac. Your kindness will never be forgotten. You have helped us through a most difficult time.

Truly yours,

Hoda, Samuel, Benjamin and Dina Isaac.

...Mr. Maurice Lichaa of Daly City, California.

Mr. Maurice Lichaa lost the battle with cancer on May 21, 1992. Till the very last day, he never complained or questioned his fate. No matter how much he was aching, he was always thankful. He was a great man.

Thanks to everybody in the community across the United States and abroad for your prayers, thoughtfulness and your help during Maurice's illness. We were all very much touched by your moral support whether you called, send a card. We felt our community a One Big family where each person cares about the welfare of the other.

Thank you again and G-d bless you all.

Sincerely,

Fortunee, Habib and Denise Lichaa. •

DAVID LICHAA, RACHEL LICHAA, ZAKI, NAZLI, YVONNE & JOSEPH LICHAA, MALAKA PERLMAN, CHARLOTTE CONRADI, HAIM & RACHEL MASLIAH, By Claire Perlman • JACQUES L. MANGOUBI, NAZLI HAIM MASLIAH, ESTHER YOUSSEF EL AFRANGUI, ZAKI L. I. LICHAA, JOSEPH L. I. LICHAA, DAVID L. I. LICHAA, YVONNE Z. LICHAA, JOSEPH Z. LICHAA, HOSNA Z. LICHAA, SULTANA L. MANGOUBI, SARINAH LIETO MANGOUBI, BAROUKH L. MANGOUBI, LIETO SHABETAI MANGOUBI, SATOUT COHEN, By Esther Mangoubi • ELIE AMIN LISHA, ELIAHOU YACoub ASLAN, By Marie Lisha • ELIAHOU HABIB ISHAK, By Abraham Darwish • ELIAHOU HABIB ISHAK, By Rose Levy • AZIZA BAT YACoub MARZOUK, SHALOM BEN MOSHE PESSAH, LILIAN BAT SHALOM PESSAH, YOUSSEF EL SERGANI, By David Moussa • SULTANA & HAFEZ TAHAN, ESTHER & AMIN MARZOUK, By Lieto Marzouk • SUZANNE HEFEZ, By Abe & Lisa Hefez • RACHEL HAFEZ LEVY, By Nelly Hafez Levi • JOSEPH OVADIA, ABRAHAM OVADIA, ABDOU ABDALLAH & FORTUNEE MASSUDA, AMIN MARZOUK & ESTHER ABDEL WAHED, DR. SELIM IBRAHIM & ESTHER SENANI, By Allen Ovidia • MOURAD YOUSSEF OVADIA, ESTHER L.NOUNOU, ELIAHOU Y. EL KODSI, YOUSSEF Z. LISHAA, AMAR DAOUD DARWISH, HANA DAOUD LEVY, By Sarine Wahed • ZAKI IBRAHIM SOLIMAN & MATHILDA SOLIMAN MASSOUDA, By Esther El Kodsi • ELIE B.LICHAA, ZAKI B.LICHAA, ALBERT B.LICHAA, REGINA B.LICHAA, ESTHER B.LICHAA MASSUDA, By Suzanne Lichaa • NAZIMA MOUSSA LISHAA, By Sarina Pessah • AZIZA MOUSSA, SHALOM MOUSSA PESSAH, By Elie Moussa • JOSEPH ZAKI LICHAA, ZAKI LICHAA ESHAK, ESTHER ELIAHOO NONO, LIETO YOUSSEF EL KODSI, DR. ELIE LICHAA, MOURAD YOUSSEF ABDEL WAHED, By Leonie Lichaa • MOSHE BEN ABRAHAM MASSUDA, By Abraham Massuda • LIETO YOUSEPH EL KODSI, ESTHER ELIAHOU NOUNA, MOURAD YOUSEF ABDEL WAHED, YOUSEPH ZAKI LICHAA, DAVID ZAKI LICHAA, By Suzanne Lichaa • ABRAHAM OVADIA, AZIZA PESSAH, By Alice Ovidia • MOUSSA IBRAHIM MASSUDA, By Nelly Massuda • YACOB LESHAA, By Mounir Leshaa • YAFET IBRAHIM ISHAK SHAMI, By Perla Habib • HABIB LIETO ISHAK, NAZLI SHABTAI ABDALLA, By Camelia Habib • ABRAHAM OVADIA, ZAKI SELIM IBRAHIM, By Alice Ovidia • YACoub

LESHAA, By Farida El Gazzar • DR. ELIE HABIB ISAAC, By Fortunee & Maurice Lichaa • MOUSSA PESSAH, ROSA BAT AMIN MENACHE, YACOUB ELIAHO EL GAZZAR, SARINA BAT AMIN MENACHE, By Remy & Joe Pessah • HOSNI LIETO MOURAD, By Mary Mourad • LEON MOUSSA DARWISH, SUZAN MATTATIA MARZOUK, By Ishak Hefez • MOUSSA OVADIA, By Elie Ovadia • MUSSA MASSUDA, By the Massuda Family • ALBERT OVADIA, By Rachel Ovadia • HABIB YOUNES, LOUNA YOUNES, ROGER ESKINAZI, By Albert & Nadia Eskinazi • MARY ABRAHAM DARWISH, OVADI DARWISH, FLORA MARZOUK AND LIETO MARZOUK, By Sabet Darwish • HAY H.ELTAHAN, FLORE A.ASLAN, FARAG A. SHAMMAS, HAFEZ E. TAHAN, SOLTANA H. LICHAA, By Cecilia Tahan • NAZIMA MOUSSA LICHAA, By Amin Pessah • MOSHE I. MASLIAH, GRACIA F. NOUNA, CHALOM I. MASSOUDA, By Elie Massouda • MALAKA A. COHEN, By Azie Habib • DAVID ZAKI LICHAA, By Joe Pessah • DR. ELIE HABIB ISAAC, By Perla Isaac and Youssef Isaac • ELIAHO YOSSEF SADDI, KAMAR BAT YESHOUA AYOUB, By Michael Saddik • FORTUNEE COHEN, ZAKI COHEN, By Malaka Ovadia • DR. ELIE HABIB ISAAC, By Rahmin Eliahou El Gazzar • JOSEPH OVADIA, ABRAHAM OVADIA, By Jack Ovadia • DR. ELIE HABIB ISHAK, ABRAHAM OVADIA, ZAKI SILIM IBRAHIM, ESTHER SINANI, DR. SELIM IBRAHIM, ZAKI FARAG LEVY, By Alice Ovadia • MAURICE HABIB LICHAA, DR. ELY ISACC, FARAG MARZOUK, JOSEPH YACOUB PESSAH, RACHEL HAFEZ PESSAH, HABIB YOUSSEF LICHAA, MATHILDA ELIAHO LICHAA, YOUSSEF PESSAH, RACHEL YACOUB PESSAH, REGINA MOUSSA LICHAA, YOUSSEF MOUSSA LICHAA, NAZIMA MOUSSA LICHAA, AMIN YACOUB HAINA, By Fortunee Lichaa • SULTANA ISHAK MASSOUDA, By Abraham Lichaa • MAURICE LICHAA, By Rachel Lichaa • DR. ELIE HABIB ISAAC, MAURICE LICHAA, By Hoda Isaac • ELIE AMIN LICHAA, By Marie Lichaa • YOUSSEF ZAKI LICHAA, By Leonie Lichaa.

❖ APPRECIATION ❖

I am overwhelmed to see the enthusiasm eagerness of our committee to add their personal touch to our synagogue:

► MR. & MRS. SABET OVADIA of San Francisco installed a gate to the Synagogue.

► MR. & MRS. DAVID KHEDR and MR. & MRS. DAVID MOUSSA installed new carpets.

► MR. YOUSSEF MASSUDA of Maryland hand made a Carpet for the Chazzan.

► MR. IBRAHIM LEVY of Ohio donated one of his art paintings.

► MRS. SUZANNE MASSOUDA of San Francisco donated two hand-made needle work.

► MR. & MRS. JOSEPH MOUSSA of Belmont installed iron windows.

► MR. & MRS. FRED LICHAA of Foster City donated a bookcase.

► MR. & MRS. ALBERT TAHAN of Ashdod Israel donated the embroidered Perochet for the Hekhal.

► MR. & MRS. FARAG SHAMAS of Ashdod Israel donated a tablecloth.

► MR. & MRS. ELIE MASSOUDA, MR. & MRS. SABET DARWISH, THE MOUSSA FAMILY donated silver 'Anadyls'.

► MR. DAVID ELICHAA of Imperial Beach, California is still enthusiastically working on the Karaite Family Tree. Should you need information about your family tree, please contact him at (619)429-1269.

Emiel Khedr Shammass

WISH LIST

The Synagogue is in need of:

- 1) **Books** for the library
- 2) **Chandeliers**
- 3) A **Sepher Torah** (can carry your name
or be in memory of loved ones.)